



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Teton
National Park

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Grand Teton National Park News Release

Park Rangers Rescue Injured Climber from Garnet Canyon

Grand Teton National Park rangers evacuated an injured climber by helicopter from Garnet Canyon on Saturday evening, July 22, at 6:30 p.m. Ava Bell, age 22, from Laramie, Wyoming, slipped at approximately 2:15 p.m. while scrambling up a rocky pitch to reach a climbing route called Open Book on the south side of Disappointment Peak. Bell fell about 20-25 feet and tumbled an additional 50-75 feet before coming to a stop; she sustained injuries to her thorax and received multiple lacerations and bruises during the accident. Bell and four climbing companions were at the 9,400-foot elevation when the mishap occurred. She was not wearing a helmet or roped up at the time. However, ropes and helmets are not typically used on this climbing approach.

One of Bell's climbing partners quickly scrambled back down into Garnet Canyon to gain cell reception and make a 911 call at 2:47 p.m. After Teton Interagency Dispatch Center received notice of the accident, two park rangers immediately began hiking/running to the location. They covered approximately 4 miles with an elevation gain of 2,700 feet in 90 degree heat, reaching Bell in less than two hours at 4:50 p.m. These rangers provided emergency medical care to Bell and assessed her condition for evacuation. Due to the nature of her injuries, and the location of the accident, it was decided to utilize an interagency contract helicopter for evacuation rather than transport her over rocky terrain on a wheeled litter.

The interagency helicopter flew into Garnet Canyon meadows where three additional park rangers staged for a helicopter short-haul evacuation procedure. Bell was placed into an evacuation suit at the accident site and subsequently suspended below the helicopter on a double rope system for a short flight back to Garnet Canyon meadows. The helicopter hovered over the landing site at the meadows while rangers released Bell from the helicopter's suspended rope. After the helicopter landed, Bell was placed inside the ship, accompanied by two rangers, for a final flight to the Lupine Meadows on the valley floor. Bell was then transported by ambulance to St. John's Medical Center in Jackson for treatment of her injuries.

This marks the sixteenth major search and rescue operation in Grand Teton National Park this year.

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